

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested in view of the following observations.

1. In the Specification

The specification is amended to include appropriate section headings and to remove specific reference to the claims.

Acknowledgment of entry of the amendment to the specification is respectfully requested in the next Office communication.

2. In the Abstract

A new abstract is submitted which incorporates the subject matter from original claims 1, 4 and 9. There is no reference to a “means” in the new abstract.

Clear support for the language employed in the abstract is found in original claims 1, 4 and 9.

Acknowledgment of entry of the new abstract is respectfully requested in the next Office communication.

3. In the Claims

Previously dependent claims 4 and 9, which were identified as reciting allowable subject matter in the Action, have been placed into independent form by including all of the limitations of claim 1.

The subject matter of claim 1, now incorporated into claims 4 and 9, has been modified by the removal of the expression “poor quality” in reference to certain sheets processed by the apparatus.

Claim 1 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The claims dependent from claim 1 have been amended to depend from one of amended claims 4 and 9.

Claims 11 and 12, which were withdrawn in the election of the claims in response to the restriction requirement, have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 13 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Acknowledgment of entry of the amendment to the claims is respectfully requested in the next Office communication.

4. Rejection of claims 1, 4 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claim 1 was rejected on the basis of the use of the term “poor quality” to describe certain sheets. Since this expression has been removed, this particular rejection is considered moot.

The rejection of claims 4 and 13 is considered moot in view of the cancellation of claim 13.

In view of these observations, withdrawal of this rejection is therefore requested.

5. Rejection of the claims in view of the prior art

The rejection of the claims in view of the prior art including U.S. patents 4,697,071 (*Hiraoka*) and 4,871,163 (*Landa*) is considered moot in view of the amendment of the claims which places the allowable subject matter over *Hiraoka* and *Landa* in independent form.

Withdrawal of these prior art rejections is therefore requested.

6. Conclusion

As a result of the amendment to the claims, and further in view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that every pending claim in the present application be allowed and the application be passed to issue.

If any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephone or facsimile communication with the applicant's attorney, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers shown below.

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Date: July 27, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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